

***Gold Key and National Silver Medal Recipient
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Steve Irwin's Dream Shoes: Crocs

By Ashley Medeiros

Many people today complain of aching feet due to their rigid, cramped shoes. It is liberating to finally remove them at the end of a tiresome day. Three Australian inventors, Lyndon Hanson, Scott Seamans, and George Boedecker, however, have discovered a solution to this enduring dilemma: Crocs (How). These spongy new shoes are airy and provide relief from the soreness that plagues people throughout the world, which may even cause you to want to wear your shoes all of the time. Yet although they have become the most ubiquitous shoes in one hundred countries, as evident from the company's \$51.7 million fiscal cash and cash equivalent profit in 2008, Crocs actually cause more harm to their buyers than they do comfort (Crocs, Inc).

Crocs are made of a thick, rubbery material called Croslite that is styled intentionally with multiple holes that appear throughout the entire shoe (Crocs Home). These holes allow various bacteria and objects to seep into the inside of the shoe and onto the wearer's foot, where they will manifest and eventually infect either the foot or the entire body. The inclusion of the gaps in Crocs may be fashionable, as they allow for air to flow into the shoe to cool your feet on a warm day, but what is not a trend is becoming ill due to the small outlets that serve as highways to germs on the ground, such as bacteria from plantar warts. These nasty growths expand and reside on your skin, which usually leads to costly removal. By wearing Crocs, you are simply welcoming the unhealthy germs into your body as you collect particles on the ground, like taking a memoir of the bacteria from all the places you have been and storing it in your

immune system. This is particularly hazardous for children, who are more likely to wear them. The avoidance of Crocs may save your family from unnecessary harm.

Crocs, along with being unsanitary, are also potentially dangerous. The closed-cell resin that is used to create the shoes is easily worn down, creating a hazard for those who walk in them often. The bottoms of the shoes will erode, ridding them of the grip that prevents you from slipping and falling. This is especially perilous for those who frequently wear Crocs and are unknowingly corroding the parts of the shoe that protect them from sliding on smooth surfaces. Not only do these shoes allow for slipping, but they also serve as potential hazards to people traveling on escalators. Consumer Reports has recorded “seventy-seven escalator entrapments” of Crocs-wearers from January 2006 to May 2008 because of the shoes’ flimsy material. *The New York Daily News* also reported an instance where a 3-year-old girl’s toe was “severely and permanently injured...when her Crocs-clad foot became caught in an escalator at JFK Airport” (Crocs and Similar). The insides of the shoes are also unsafe. Some people prefer shoes to be capacious to allow for comfortable movement. In fact, Crocs provide comfort with the soft, lightweight Croslite material from which they are made, a luxury that other shoes fail to supply. However, most people will not appreciate the ample space in the shoe that permits your foot to shift around every time you take a step. Walking becomes a challenge when wearing Crocs because you will be constantly concerned about keeping your foot positioned inside the shoe without it falling off, as well as the irreversible risks that buying these shoes entails.

In addition to these displeasing factors, Crocs are also overpriced. While most casual shoes range from \$15.00 to \$20.00, like the Bjorndal Nola 2 clogs that sell at \$17.98, Crocs cost over \$25.00 for similar shoes (Nola). For instance, the Kids’ Crocs Cayman Clog costs \$24.95 (Crocs Cayman). Most parents are not willing to pay this price since their children’s feet will most likely grow at a rapid pace, especially if they are younger, and the shoes will experience

more erosion because of children's active and energetic nature. This price also does not include the added cost of Jibbitz, the newly invented accessories that fit into the holes in Crocs. These charms, which were created by Sheri and Rich Schmelzer, range from puppies to letters to sports team logos, depending on the wearer's preference. Jibbitz usually cost \$1.99 each, and while this price does not appear to be very expensive, the appeal they have for children will cause the expense to rise as you establish a collection of various 3-dimensional buttons (Jibbitz).

In the world today, no one needs any superfluous distractions or worries, and Crocs only add to your anxiety and discomfort. I caution you to sidestep these alluring shoes if you want to live healthily, remain safe, and avoid unnecessary expenses. Crocs are perfect for relaxing at home and quickly shopping at the grocery store for the milk that you forgot to buy last week, though. If your sole aim is comfort, then Crocs will certainly fulfill your expectations. Yet watch out for your toes: crocodiles have a tendency to bite.

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